

MEXICO**Reading Essentials and Study Guide 2****Mexico's History****Key Terms**

- jade** a shiny stone that comes in many shades of green
obsidian a hard black glass created by volcanoes
maize corn
hieroglyphics form of writing that uses signs and symbols
mural wall painting
hacienda large ranch

Drawing From Experience

What are some examples of different cultures blending in the United States? Do you eat Mexican or Chinese food? Have you danced to music that has its roots in Africa? Mexico's culture is a mix of Native American and Spanish cultures.

The last section discussed Mexico's land, climate, and economic regions. In this section, you will read about how Mexico's past has shaped its culture.

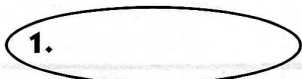
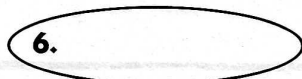

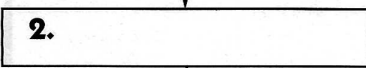
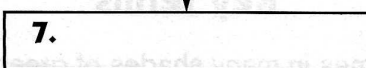
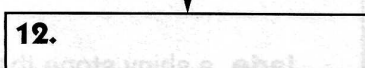
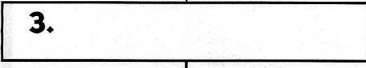


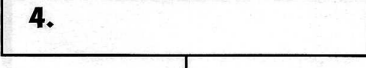
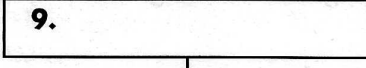
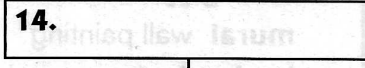



Organizing Your Thoughts

Use the diagram on the next page to help you take notes. Three Native American cultures built highly advanced civilizations in Mexico long before Europeans arrived. In the ovals, name the three Native American groups. In the boxes below the ovals, give four examples of the accomplishments of their advanced civilizations.

MEXICO

Reading Essentials and Study Guide 2 (continued)

Native American Cultures

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Read to Learn

Introduction

Ancestors of today's Native Americans were the first people to come to Mexico. The Spanish conquered the land in the 1500s. Today Mexico's culture is a mix of Native American and Spanish cultures.

16. What two peoples blended together to create Mexico's culture today?

Native American Civilizations

Native Americans came to Mexico long before Christopher Columbus arrived in North America. The Olmec, Maya, and Aztec built highly advanced civilizations from about 1200 B.C. to the A.D. 1500s.

The Olmecs built the first civilization in the Americas around 1200 B.C. They made large carved stone statues to decorate their cities. They also made jewelry out of **jade**. Jade is a shiny stone that comes in many shades of green and other colors. They used **obsidian**, a hard black glass created by the volcanoes in the area, to carve the statues and jewelry. The Olmecs used obsidian because they had no metals.

MEXICO**Reading Essentials and Study Guide 2 (continued)**

The Olmecs were the first to grow **maize**, or corn, for food. The Olmecs built cities and ceremonial centers. They also built large drainage systems to keep their fields and settlements from flooding. The Olmecs lasted longer than any other Native American civilization. The civilization disappeared in about 400 B.C.

The Maya lived in the rain forests of the Yucatán Peninsula and other areas beginning about A.D. 250. Religion was an important part of Mayan life. The priests wanted to measure time correctly. Then they could hold religious ceremonies at the right time. By studying the heavens, they developed a calendar of 365 days.

The Maya built huge stone temples. They shaped the temples like pyramids with steps. One, the temple of Kukulcan, showed planning. The steps on both sides plus one at the very top added up to 365. Most likely, they wanted to match the days of the year.

The Maya created a form of writing called **hieroglyphics**. It used signs and symbols. They had a number system as well. Artists decorated important buildings with **murals**, or wall paintings.

Around A.D. 900, the Maya suddenly declined. No one knows why. Some think they used the land too much, making it unable to grow crops. Others believe that war or disease caused the decline. The Maya did not disappear. Later generations still live in the area and speak the language.

Around A.D. 1200, the Aztec moved into central Mexico from the north. They ruled a large empire. Today Mexico City stands on the site of the grand Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlán. The Aztec built Tenochtitlán on two islands in the middle of a lake. Long roadways connected it to the land. The city had huge pyramids with steps. It had large open squares. People traded goods in busy markets. Farmers grew their crops on "floating gardens." They filled rafts with mud and planted crops in them. Much of Mexico's food, crafts, language, and traditions come from the Aztec.

17. What was Tenochtitlán?

MEXICO**Reading Essentials and Study Guide 2 (continued)****Spanish Mexico**

In 1519 Hernán Cortés brought his Spanish army to Mexico. They had heard that Tenochtitlán was filled with gold. They marched to the city. Other Native Americans who were enemies of the Aztec joined the Spanish. With these allies, better weapons, and horses, the Spanish defeated the Aztec.

Spain made Mexico a colony, or overseas territory. The Spanish wanted Mexico's gold and silver. Many Spanish people came to Mexico to live. Some raised cattle on large ranches called **haciendas**. Others ran mines. The Spaniards made Native Americans work on the ranches and in the mines. Many died from bad treatment. Thousands more died of diseases they caught from Europeans. Spanish priests tried to improve the lives of Native Americans. As a result, many Native Americans accepted their religion. Today most Mexicans are Catholic.

18. Why did the Spanish want to defeat the Aztec?

Independence and Revolution

In time Mexicans wanted to be free of Spanish rule. In 1810 they revolted. Their leader, a Catholic priest named Miguel Hidalgo, was caught and killed. The rebellion against Spain continued. Mexicans finally won independence in 1821. They set up a republic with an elected president in 1824. They later lost Texas and California to the United States.

For many years, a few people held most of the power and wealth in Mexico. Poor Mexicans grew angry. Emiliano Zapata led a revolution. He wanted to give the poor back their land that the powerful people took from them. His forces took many haciendas. They divided the land among the poor. Francisco "Pancho" Villa tried to help the poor in the northwest.

19. Why did the Mexicans fight the Spanish?
